

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-07 /080 W

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R 070705Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1108

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MUSCAT 531

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MOPS MU IR SA JO TC

SUBJECT: SULTAN QABOOS' COMMENTS ON DHOFAR WAR AND OMANI
FOREIGN RELATIONS

SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR

HAD 25 MINUTE PRIVATE AUDIENCE WITH SULTAN

QABOOS MAY 5 AT OUR REQUEST. SULTAN HINTED AT MINOR PROBLEMS
JORDANIAN BATTALION HAVING HERE BUT GAVE NO INDICATION OF ANY-
THING SERIOUS. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN PDY MIGHT BE STEPPING
UP ITS INTERFERENCE IN DHOFAR, AND WAS PESSIMISTIC AT POSSIB-
ILITY OF POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. SULTAN TOOK OCCASION TO ASK
THAT WE USE OPPORTUNITIES WE MAY HAVE TO ENCOURAGE SAUDIS AND
IRANIANS TO KEEP UP THEIR ATTENTION TO AND SUPPORT OF
OMAN. HE ALSO SOUGHT USG ASSESSEMENT OF JUST HOW SOVIETS
VIEW PDY AND HOW MUCH THEY ARE PUSHING PDY TO MAKE TROUBLE
IN DHOFAR. ENDSSUMMARY.

1. KING HUSSEIN'S VISIT: SULTAN SAID KING'S DAY IN DHOFAR
LAST MONTH WAS WORTHWHILE. IT GAVE JORDANIAN FORCES CHANCE
TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR HIGH MORALE. A FEW MISUNDERSTANDINGS

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CAME INTO THE OPEN, MATTERS ON WHICH JORDANIANS IN THE FIELD

FELT THEY WERE NOT RECEIVING PROPER DEGREE OF COOPERATION FROM SUVNTAN'S ARMED FORCES. SULTAN SAID HE "LEARNED OF THESE THINGS MYSELF" ONLY THAT DAY AND WAS ABLE HELP DISCUSS AND STRAIGHTEN THEM OUT.

2. LOOKING AHEAD IN DHOFAR: SULTAN EXPRESSED SATISFACTION AT MILITARY PROGRESS MADE BETWEEN MONSOONS FROM FALL OF 1974 TO PRESENT. MUCH MORE GROUND IS UNDER GOVT CONTROL, NEW DEFENSIVE LINES HAVE BEEN RIGGED TO HELP KEEP IT SAFE, AND FRIENDLY FORCES HAVE BUILT UP OVERALL STRENGTH SUBSTANTIALLY. THE NUMBER OF HARD-CORE DHOFARI REBELS HAS BEEN REDUCED, RECRUITS "FROM THE GULF" HAVE STOPPED COMING, AND HAPPILY ENEMY NOT NOW SUCCEEDING IN GETTING JABALI BOYS FROM DHOFAR FOR THEIR INDOCTRINATION SCHOOLS. BUT REPORTS OF INCREASING DIRECT PDRY PERSONNEL INVOLVEMENT WORRY HIM. SULTAN SAID PDRY NOW HAS 300 OF ITS OWN MEN IN DHOFAR AND HE HEARS THEY ARE RECRUITING A THOUSAND MORE TO SEND IN.

3. POLITICAL SETTLEMENT PROSPECTS: ASKED ABOUT CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF SETTLING INSURGENCY THROUGH POLITICAL CONTACTS, SULTAN WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC. AT LEAST, HE SAID, SAUDIS ARE NOT LETTING HIM DOWN IN THIS RESPECT, I.E. IN DEALING WITH PDRY THEY ARE GIVING NOTHING AWAY FOR FREE BUT HAVE CONSISTENTLY TOLD ADEN REGIME IT MUST ACTUALLY MODERATE ITS POLICIES VIS-A-VIS DHOHA BEFORE SAUDI ECONOMIC AID WILL FLOW TO PDRY. (HE SAID UAE GETS A SOMEWHAT LOWER GRADE FROM HIM ON THIS SUBJECT: THEY'RE STANDING FAST ON QUESTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH PDRY, BUT HAVE BEEN SUPPLYING SOME AID SUCH AS FUNDS TO PAY TEACHERS.) SULTAN CONCLUDED THAT THE "SAUDI CARD"--ABILITY TO PROVIDE MASSIVE ECONOMIC AID--IS CRUCIAL ONE AND HE HOPED IT WOULD NOT BE USED PREMATURELY TO OMAN'S DISADVANTAGE.

4. ASKED IF HE HAD ANY SPECIAL COMMENTS OR REQUESTS THAT I MIGHT TAKE UP ON MY CONSULTATION IN WASHINGTON AT END OF MAY, QABOOS SAID TWO THINGS MIGHT BE USEFUL:

A. WE MIGHT CONSIDER IF WE COULD FIND OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH OUR EMBASSIES OR OTHER CHANNELS FOR ENCOURAGING SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN TO CONTINUE THEIR HELP TO OMAN. SULTAN

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SAID HE KNOWS BOTH KING KHALID AND PRINCE FAHD AND IS CONFIDENT GOOD OMANI-SAUDI RELATIONS WILL CONTINUE. SAID HE IS CONFIDENT HOUSE OF SAUD WILL PULL TOGETHER FOR ITS OWN AND COUNTRY'S GOOD. HE HOPED SAG WOULD RETAIN ITS INTEREST IN OMANI SECURITY SITUATION AND NOT THINK THE DHOFAR WAR IS WON YET. OMAN, HE SAID, HOPES SAUDIS CAN PROVIDE "EQUIPMENT AND MONEY" TO HELP SULTANATE ALONG. AS FOR IRANIANS, HE UNDERSCORED THERE IS NO INDICATION WHATEVER OF ANY SLACKENING OF

ASSISTANCE, BUT WITH RECENT IRANIAN-IRAQI AGREEMENT HE FELT HE SHOULD WATCH THE SITUATION CAREFULLY.

B. SECONDLY, HE IS CURIOUS HOW WE SEE CURRENT SOVIET POLICY AND THINKING AS IT MANIFESTS ITSELF IN SUPPORT FOR PDRY. JUST HOW IMPORTANT IS ADEN TO THE RUSSIANS, TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THEY DIRECTLY PROMOTING PDRY TROUBLEMAKING IN DHOFAR, AND IS PRESENT US-USSR ENVIRONMENT OF DETENTE HAVING ANY MODERATING IMPACT ON THIS? HE WOULD WELCOME OUR ASSESSMENT ON THIS AT SOME POINT.

5. COMMENTS:

A. MAIN PREOCCUPATION OF SULTAN AND HIS GOVT IN RECENT WEEKS HAS BEEN ITS MANEUVERING TO GAIN A PILE OF CASH FROM SAUDIS SO AS TO EMERGE FROM CURRENT FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES. FACT THAT SULTAN ALLUDED TO THIS WITH ME, ALBEIT IN RATHER TIMID MANNER MENTIONED IN PARA 4-A, IS INTERESTING BIT OF EVIDENCE THAT OMANIS ARE NOT OVER-CONFIDENT THEY CAN GET SAG TO COME THROUGH IN VERY HANDSOME FASHION. HE RAISED IT, OF COURSE, BECAUSE I HAPPENED TO BE WITH HIM AND DOUBTLESS WOULD NOT HAVE GONE OUT OF HIS WAY TO DO SO OTHERWISE. FROM HERE WE DO NOT RECOMMEND IMMEDIATE ACTION ON THIS REQUEST; I WILL PLAN TO DISCUSS IT IN WASHINGTON.

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B. BY SPEAKING OF "EQUIPMENT" SULTAN OF COURSE REFERS TO MILITARY SHOPPING LIST, MENTIONED IN VERY RECENT REPORTING, WHICH OMAN HAS PASSED FOR RIYADH'S ATTENTION. OMANIS CURRENTLY CONSIDER THIS MUCH LOWER PRIORITY THAN THEIR DESIRE FOR CASH, YET IT COULD TAKE ON SAME URGENCY IF OMANIS CONVINCE THEMSELVES THAT PFLO, PDRY AND THEIR SOVIET SUPPORTERS ARE ENTERING ON A PERIOD OF BUILDING UP PDRY'S MILITARY POTENTIAL TO CONDUCT CONVENTIONAL OR MORE EFFECTIVE GUERRILLA WARFARE IN DHOFAR. THERE MAY BE JUST ENOUGH WELL-PLACED HAWKS IN OMANGOV CIRCLES TO BRING PRESSURE TO BEAR ON SULTAN FOR A DEGREE OF CONVENTIONAL MILITARY ARMING BY OMAN ITSELF THAT WOULD GO BEYOND ANYTHING CONTEMPLATED UP TO NOW. I EXPECT TO TALK OVER THIS TOPIC IN DEPARTMENT ALSO.

C. WOULD BE USEFUL FOR DEPT TO PREPARE UPDATED INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY REGARDING AREA OF SULTAN'S CONCERN IN PARA 4-B ABOVE FOR USE IN BRIEFING SUSQAN AND HIS FONMIN.
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